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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1903

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July 29, 2011

Mr. Patrick R. Donahoe
Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW
Washington, DC 20260-0010

Dear Postmaster General Donahoe:

I am writing to express my deep concern over proposals to close up to 34 Maine Post Offices and the damaging impact this could have on the Postal Service's ability to provide universal service to rural communities throughout my home state.

As we are both well aware, the United States Postal Service (USPS) continues to face severe financial challenges, in part due to a steady decline in mail volume, and continued economic instability. Once again, the Postal Service is facing as much as \$8 billion in losses at the end of this fiscal year. Furthermore, current projections are that the Postal Service will draw down its remaining \$3 billion from its \$15 billion line of credit with the U.S. Treasury, and in October will be unable to make retiree health benefit trust fund payments and meet payroll. Given this reality, I believe that the Postal Service must take steps to cut costs and improve efficiency, and I am encouraged by several measures that the USPS has undertaken – measures that have resulted in over \$12 billion in savings in the last three years. However, I also believe that the Postal Service has a responsibility to continue providing reliable, affordable, and convenient services that the public has come to expect, especially in rural communities throughout the country.

For that reason, I am extremely concerned by your announcement on July 26, 2011, that the Postal Service plans to conduct a study of approximately 3,700 post offices, stations, and branches, including 34 in Maine, to determine whether discontinuance and/or conversion to forms of alternative access is appropriate. The majority of the postal facilities that you have identified in Maine serve rural and remote areas in the state, where an alternative facility is not an option. Closing these facilities would markedly diminish postal services provided to these rural communities, and particularly, services to the elderly and small businesses, who would lose a vital business resource and be forced to endure considerable hardship in finding an alternate post office. Additionally, as I am sure you can appreciate, post offices in rural towns often serve as the keystone in the heart of the community, inherently tied to a community's identity, and loss of these facilities would have a devastating impact.

I have long believed that Mainers in the northern woods, islands, and small rural towns deserve the same access to postal services as those individuals who live in big cities. If the Postal Service were to diminish universal service and ease of access, this critical communication link

AUBURN
TWO GREAT FALLS PLAZA
SUITE 7B
AUBURN, ME 04210
(207) 786-2451

AUGUSTA
40 WESTERN AVENUE, SUITE 408C
AUGUSTA, ME 04330
(207) 622-8292

BANGOR
202 HARLOW STREET, SUITE 214
BANGOR, ME 04401
(207) 945-0432

BIDDEFORD
227 MAIN STREET
BIDDEFORD, ME 04005
(207) 282-4144

PORTLAND
3 CANAL PLAZA, SUITE 601
PORTLAND, ME 04101
(207) 874-0883
MAINE RELAY SERVICE
TDD 1-955-3323

PRESQUE ISLE
169 ACADEMY STREET, SUITE 3
PRESQUE ISLE, ME 04769
(207) 764-5124

IN MAINE CALL TOLL-FREE 1-800-432-1599

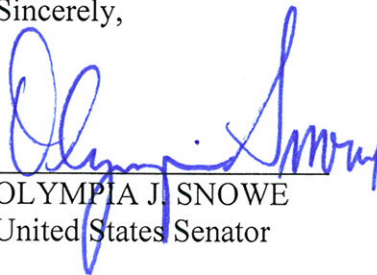
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upon which many Americans rely would be irretrievably broken. While I understand the imperative to reduce costs, it is absolutely critical that your actions not tear at the fabric of island communities and rural towns and villages by denying them the reliable, affordable, and convenient postal services currently provided.

Moving forward, I expect your assurances that the Postal Service will review my constituents' many concerns regarding the proposed closures and consolidations, as well as the potentially harmful effect on the communities themselves. I also request that you keep me fully informed of your findings as you continue to review this matter.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your timely reply.

Sincerely,



OLYMPIA J. SNOWE
United States Senator